



All Angels' Church 'Safe Church' Policy for Children & Youth

Last updated December 4, 2023

By God's grace, members, clergy, staff, and families can partner together in the work of fostering environments of safety and welcome for all of our students.

Implementation and compliance for the policy is under the purview of The Director of Children, Robert Wohner, and the Priest-in-Charge, The Rev. Jarrett Kerbel. Contact them (or any other staff or Vestry member) to confidentially share concerns and questions regarding violations or areas of improvement in regards to a student's experience or threats to their wellbeing.

All Angels' holds the physical, spiritual and emotional safety of our children and youth as a paramount commitment of our ministries. Children who worship, learn and share fellowship at our church are made in the image of God and will be accorded all respect and protection, consistent with their dignity and the delight God takes in them. Without safety, our ability to share the love of Jesus will be confounded.

To that end, below is our policy for Child Safety in this document:

1. All Adults who work with Children and Youth must complete regular training to keep God's Children Safe. Through the Diocese of New York we share a contract with Praesidium Academy which offers online Safe Church training. The online platform also helps us track participation and course completion. All Staff members must renew the training every five years. The Vestry is also required to take safe church training.

2. Clergy and C&Y staff must complete mandated reporter training through the State of New York.
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cps/mandated-reporter-training.php>
3. All Church Staff are subject to background checks through Praesidium's background check service. Background checks are completed before the first day of employment. Background checks include criminal history and child abuse history. Volunteers who work with children will also complete background checks for child abuse history. Background checks will be done every two years for the duration of employment.
4. Clergy and staff of All Angels Church are mandatory reporters. We are mandated by New York State law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the state hotline, the New York State Central Register (SCR).
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cps/mandated-reporter-training.php>
5. All volunteers who work with children and youth will be subject to background checks using the Praesidium system. We will use the "High Access Volunteer Package: Including 1 Confidence Criminal & Sex Offender Database w/Alias Search 4 , 1 County Criminal Search" This screening will be conducted before volunteering begins and every other year for duration of volunteering. This applies to volunteers over 18 years of age.
6. All volunteers who work with children and youth will complete Praesidium Safe Church training within 30 days of beginning volunteering.
7. By agreeing to be a volunteer with children and youth the volunteer is agreeing to be a mandated reporter. When a volunteer observes a violation they should come to the CY Director and the Clergy. They will begin the mandated reporting process together.
8. Child safety will include emotional, spiritual and physical safety. We will strive to create an environment free of bullying, name calling, exclusion, physical violence, spiritual manipulation, or exposure to topics or materials that are inappropriate for children.
9. Behavioral challenges with children and youth will be addressed between teachers and students and also referred to parents if concerns persist. When possible and appropriate we will encourage children and youth to engage in reconciliation with each other when hurt occurs. More severe or dangerous behavioral problems will be addressed immediately with parents.
10. Best Practice: Staff members and volunteers will observe the rule that two unrelated adults at least two years older than the oldest participant must be present at all times when engaged with children. If adults find themselves alone with a child, the adult should move out of that space, taking the child with them to a place where other adults are present. For example, if a minor walks into my office I would politely get up and continue talking with them as we walk to a space where other adults are around.

11. Bare Minimum Practice: An adult and a high school youth can supervise a classroom.
12. When providing pastoral care to a child or youth, clergy, staff or trained volunteers must either keep the door ajar or be in a room with an interior window in the wall or door that is not covered with a shade or blind. Ideally pastoral or discipling visits with children and youth should occur in public spaces like a coffee shop. If clergy, staff or volunteers are meeting one-to-one with a child or youth they must tell another staff member beforehand or as soon as possible.
13. All emails and texts from Adult Staff, Volunteers and Clergy to a minor must cc' the parents. Unless it is an emergency, no texting or emailing with minors from 8 pm to 7 am.
14. All activities with children and youth must take place in rooms that are unlocked, with doors that contain windows or are left open during the course of the activity. It is crucial that all spaces where children gather be open to outside observation.
15. All activities with children and youth must include two adults. Any group over 20 must add an adult for every additional 10 children (1:10). For nursery-aged children this ratio is 1:5.
16. Staff and volunteers will, as a rule, will not initiate touching or hugging children outside of their family and will never direct children to hug or touch someone else. For games that involve physical contact or prayers that involve holding hands, it is important to state boundaries and ask for consent from the group. Unrelated children over 4 will be invited to sit next to an adult or youth leader and not on laps.
17. Photographing and sharing photographs of minors engaged in church activities is only done with the signed consent of parents. A photo release form will be included in the C&Y registration form.
18. Children and youth must be supervised in the building by parents, staff or volunteers at all times. Parents must drop off and retrieve their children at the beginning and end of each activity being sure to sign their child in and out so we know the child is safe and in proper custody.
19. Whenever an incident or accident occurs at the Church or at an offsite, parents will be notified as soon as possible and full transparency will be practiced.
20. Pastoral care will be provided immediately to children, youth and families involved in any accident or incident along with follow up calls and visits as needed.
21. Whenever an incident or accident occurs at the Church or at an offsite, the Priest-in-Charge/Rector will be notified as soon as possible and he/she will inform at least one Warden.
22. Whenever an incident or accident occurs the supervising staff member or volunteer will write an incident report as soon as possible and share it with the Priest-in-Charge. (Incident report form?)

23. When children and youth attend an away event or camp operated by All Angels Church, our rules will apply offsite.
24. Parents must provide specific written permission for their children to leave the property with any other adult than themselves and provide this information in each child's registration form or give a dated note to the child's teacher or choir director.
25. At offsite events, children and youth must sleep in gender segregated rooms apart from each other. Children who identify as non-binary/agender may choose which room is right for them or we can also provide a separate space.
26. Best Practice: At offsite events, adult volunteers and staff will sleep separately from children and youth if at all possible. Bare Minimum: Adults can be in the same room as children and youth only if another adult is also present in that room.
27. At an offsite event, adults, children or youth who violate safety policies by endangering, harassing, bullying or violating another child or adult will have their behavior immediately addressed by adult chaperones. A range of consequences may be applied based on the severity of the situation and the opportunity for reconciliation and learning. If a child is sent home, the CY minister will contact the clergy immediately and the clergy will reach out to the family for support as soon as possible
28. When children and youth attend an offsite event under the sponsorship of All Angels Church, that is not operated by All Angels Church, we will ask for a copy of the Child Safety Policy of the organization and perform the following checks;
 - a. What is the staff-per-child ratio for the event or camp?
 - b. What training is required for the staff of the event or camp?
 - c. What is the policy for informing families and church staff in the event of an accident or violation?
 - d. This information will be made available to families in the lead up to the event.
29. When children and youth attend an offsite event under the sponsorship of All Angels Church, that is not operated by All Angels Church, staff and volunteers who attend are still responsible for the safety of our children and must advocate on their behalf, protect them, and exit an unsafe situation as necessary.
30. Claims of sexual abuse or harassment brought to the attention of staff or the wardens will be referred immediately to the Diocese of New York. For violations by clergy, the Title IV officer, the Rev. Canon Nora Smith should be contacted. For all others, the Canon to the Ordinary should be notified at the earliest convenience.

31. On AAC sponsored Youth Retreats, all mobile phones owned by minors will be collected and stored in a safe location for the duration of the retreat, except for one hour between the end of programming and dinner each day.